

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

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NOT
INDEX
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1. (Twice Amended) A composition of matter consisting essentially of an isolated polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a phenotypically silent amino acid substitution variant thereof that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.
2. (Amended) The composition of claim 1, further comprising a carrier.
3. (Twice Amended) An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, a polypeptide consisting essentially of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a phenotypically silent amino acid substitution variant thereof that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.
5. (Twice Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 4, wherein the label indicates that identification of an *Ehrlichia* infection is done using a method of detecting presence of antibodies to *Ehrlichia* comprising:
 - (a) contacting a polypeptide consisting essentially of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a phenotypically silent amino acid substitution variant of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody, with a test sample suspected of comprising antibodies to *Ehrlichia*, under conditions that allow polypeptide/antibody complexes to form; and
 - (b) detecting polypeptide/antibody complexes;wherein the detection of polypeptide/antibody complexes is an indication that an *Ehrlichia* infection is present.

7. (Amended) A composition of matter consisting essentially of an isolated polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a conservative amino acid substitution variant thereof that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.

8. (Amended) An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, a polypeptide consisting essentially of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a conservative amino acid substitution variant thereof that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.

9. (Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 4, wherein the label indicates that identification of an *Ehrlichia* infection is done using a method of detecting presence of antibodies to *Ehrlichia* comprising:

- (a) contacting a polypeptide consisting essentially of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 or a conservative amino acid substitution variant of the polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO:2 that specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody, with a test sample suspected of comprising antibodies to *Ehrlichia*, under conditions that allow polypeptide/antibody complexes to form; and
- (b) detecting polypeptide/antibody complexes;

wherein the detection of polypeptide/antibody complexes is an indication that an *Ehrlichia* infection is present.